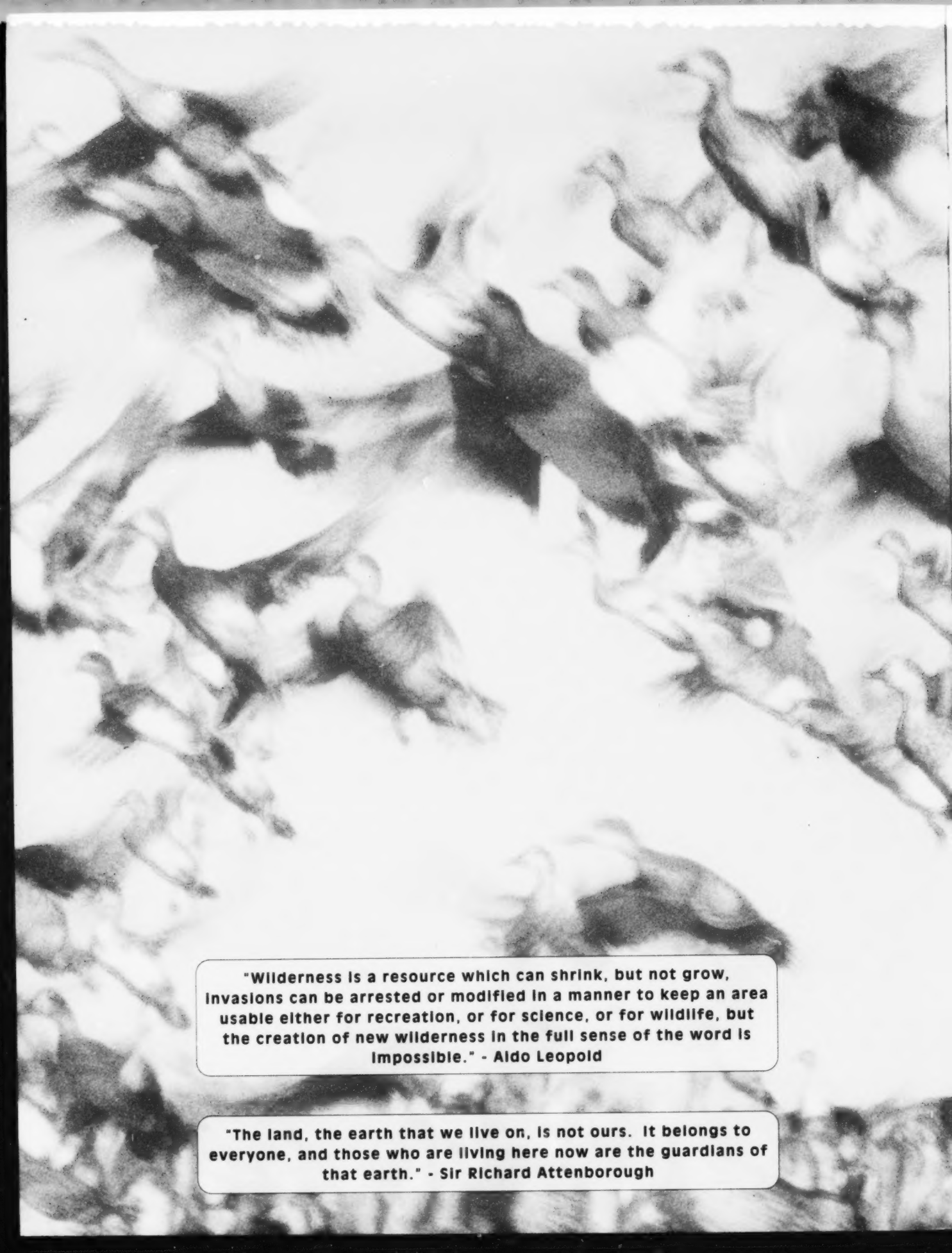
Saskatchewan's REPRESENTATIVE Areas Network 2000



"Wilderness is a resource which can shrink, but not grow, invasions can be arrested or modified in a manner to keep an area usable either for recreation, or for science, or for wildlife, but the creation of new wilderness in the full sense of the word is impossible." - Aldo Leopold

"The land, the earth that we live on, is not ours. It belongs to everyone, and those who are living here now are the guardians of that earth." - Sir Richard Attenborough

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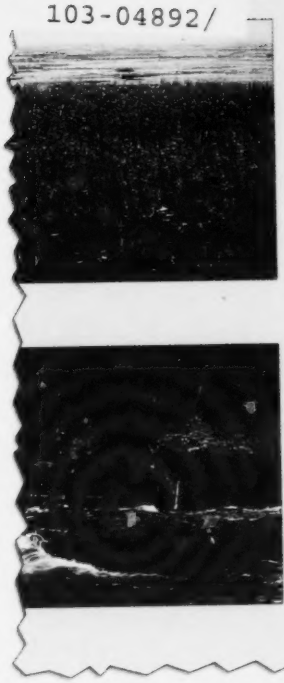
Our Living **LANDSCAPE**

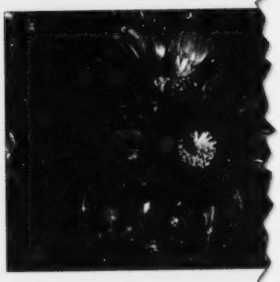


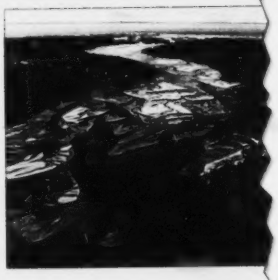
Saskatchewan has established a system of ecologically important lands and waters to aid in conservation of provincial biodiversity. This system incorporates all of the unique features, landscapes and resources already being managed as parks, ecological reserves, wildlife lands and other reserves. New sites are selected to complement the features of the existing sites and to ensure that the wide range of Saskatchewan's natural features and diversity are included within the ***Representative Areas Network***.

Existing parks and protected areas in Saskatchewan were most often selected in the past because of their unique features or topography and because of their recreational, cultural or historical values. The rugged beauty of Wildcat Hills Wilderness Park, the prominent hills and lodgepole pine of Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, the sand dunes lying within Athabasca Sand Dunes Provincial Park - - all of these features are awe-inspiring and certainly well worth preserving. They are impressive because they are unique in Saskatchewan. But they don't necessarily represent the most common landscape features, ecological values and biodiversity in this province - the prairie grasslands of southern Saskatchewan, the rolling hills of the parkland belt, the marshes and muskeg of the boreal lowlands, the aspen, birch and pine forests of the uplands and boreal shield, and the subarctic tundra and Precambrian rocks of the northern-most taiga shield. These are the features we are most familiar with because they are a large part of our environment. And it is these features that the Saskatchewan Representative Areas Network strives to capture.

Saskatchewan's landscapes have been divided into 11 distinct ecoregions, each characterized by its geology, soils, climate, plants and animals. New sites have been selected to complement the features found in existing sites and to fulfill two main purposes:

- to serve as benchmarks or long-term reference points against which the impact of management practices being applied outside of the Network can be compared; and
- to conserve samples of the range of biodiversity found in Saskatchewan.





LAND *Status*

The Representative Areas Network is very flexible in the tools that can be applied to ensure the ecological values within each ecoregion are conserved. In general, protection and management depends on ownership of the lands being protected.

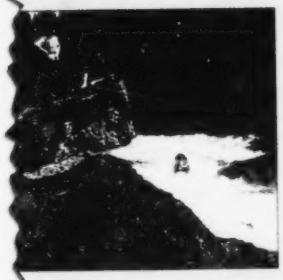
Crown Lands: Lands administered by Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management may be managed according to any one of a number of legislative options. Depending upon the resource and ecological values to be protected and the level of use to be continued within the site, a Crown land representative area may be formally designated pursuant to ***The Ecological Reserves Act***, ***The Parks Act*** (provincial park and protected areas) or ***The Wildlife Act*** (game preserves, wildlife refuges and wildlife management units or ***The Conservation Easements Act***). Designation usually includes protection for sub-surface (mineral) resources as well through the application of a Crown Mineral Reserve precluding exploration and development, or in certain cases, implementation of a Special Mineral Management Zone where specific conditions and environmental operating requirements are applied.

Private Lands and Lands Not Administered by Environment and Resource Management: Lands that are not directly administered by Environment and Resource Management are also important to the Network. By entering into joint Partnership Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding or Conservation Easements, the department is able to work closely with its partners to help guide management of these lands in a way that will ensure maintenance of the long-term health of the soil, water, plants, animals and other organisms that make up the ecosystem. In return, the department benefits by having access to these lands and resources for research, monitoring and education purposes. Overall responsibility for the land and potential access to sub-surface (mineral) resources continues to rest with the land-owning agency or individual.

A *Decade of* **PROGRESS**

At the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century, the province released its Parks System Plan to serve as a guide for establishing new park areas and protected lands. In 1992, there were approximately 1.8 million hectares protected under various designations recognized by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) categories I to IV.

In 1997, Saskatchewan unveiled its Representative Areas Network initiative through publication of an Action Plan that outlined under-represented landscape areas that should be sought within a comprehensive Network. As a starting point, the Network considered all lands in the province that came under some level of protection to be contributory to the goals and objectives of the program. This included almost three million hectares of lands protected as provincial and national parks, wildlife refuges, ecological reserves, and wildlife habitat lands.



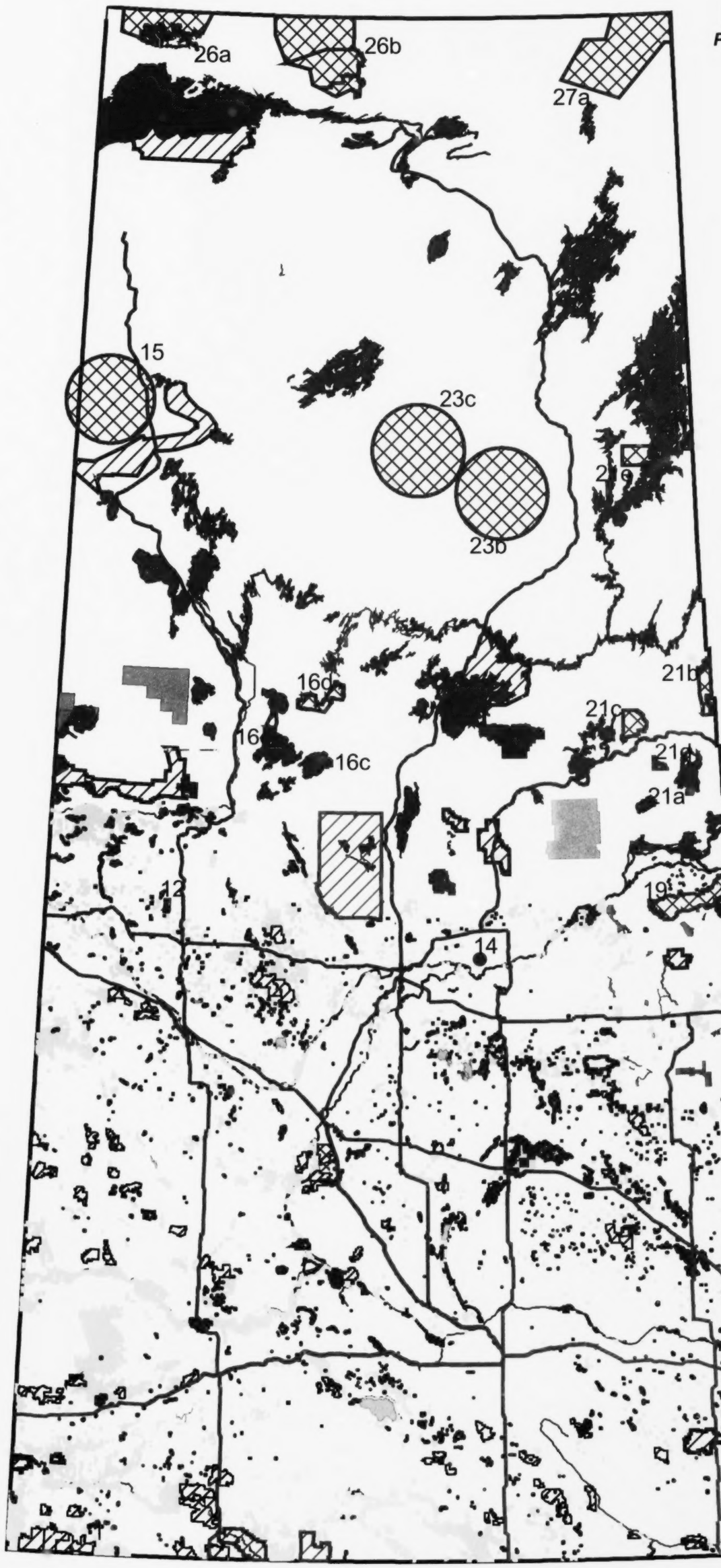
Since launching the Representative Areas Network program in 1997, an additional 1.6 million hectares of ecologically important sites have been formally added to Network. This brings the total to approximately 4.5 million hectares of protected lands, or 2.7 million hectares more since the Statement of Commitment was endorsed in 1992.

The list of representative areas designated since October 1997 is long and diverse, affecting virtually every ecoregion in the province. Newly protected Crown land areas include:

- 27 parkland reserves in the Pasquia Porcupine Forest in northeastern Saskatchewan. Totalling some 76,488 hectares, these sites capture a mix of forest, riparian areas, bog and peatlands.
- McCusker Lake Ecological Reserve, Primrose Lake Ecological Reserve and Primrose Lake Wildlife Refuge, all contained within the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range in northwestern Saskatchewan. Totaling nearly 171,000 hectares, these sites capture a combination of rolling uplands and undulating plains.
- MacDowall Bog Protected Area, a small (57 hectares) but unique site lying south of Prince Albert, contains numerous provincially and nationally rare plant species, as well as an unusually high number and variety of orchids.
- Douglas Provincial Park Expansion added 1,300 hectares to the 6,144 hectares already designated within this natural environment park adjacent to Diefenbaker Lake.
- Wapawekka Hills Representative Area lying south of La Ronge includes 67,715 hectares of rugged and pristine wilderness. The steep slopes and plateaus of the Wapawekka Hills support a diverse abundance of wildlife, mature trees and rare plants. The site also holds traditional cultural values for local Aboriginal people who have used the area for generations.

Representative Areas Network of **SASKATCHEWAN**

RAN Saskatchewan's Representative Areas Network



Proposed RAN Sites

Project #	Interim Name
12	Turtle Lake
14	Fort a la Corne
15	Firebag Lake
16c	Selenite Point
16d	Budd Lake
16e	Caribou Flats
19	Lobstick Lake
21a	Amisk Lake
21b	Mari Lake
21c	Jan Lake
21d	Sturgeon-weir
21e	Perry Lake
21f	Halldorson Bay
23c	Giekie River
23b	Pink Lake
26a	Tazin Lake
26b	Chappuis/Fontaine Lakes
27a	Misaw Lake

Designated

- Cities/Towns
- Highways/Roads
- Wapawekka Hills RA
- Seager Wheeler Lake RA
- Wildlife Refuges
- Ecological Reserves
- Parkland Reserves
- Redberry Lake Bird Sanctuary
- MacDowall Bog
- Migratory Bird Sanctuaries
- PCS Rocanville
- CFD Dundurn Site
- National Parks
- Provincial Parks
- Douglas Park Extension
- PFRA Lands
- Water bodies
- Conservation Easements
- Ducks Unlimited WHPA Lands
- SWCC Lands
- WDF Lands

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June 2000

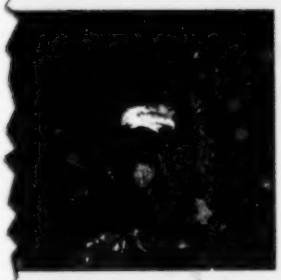
Saskatchewan's Representative Areas Network RAN

- Seager Wheeler Lake Representative Area Ecological Reserve is a large (177,921 hectares) black spruce-tamarack lowland area lying just south of Deschambault Lake. This site is home to a variety of wildlife including the great grey owl and the provincially protected woodland caribou.

Over 1.2 million hectares of private land and lands not administered by Environment and Resource Management have also been recognized within the Network through cooperative partnership arrangements. The province has forged partnerships for land and water management with:

- Ducks Unlimited Canada, covering the 364,230 hectares of marshlands and associated uplands managed by Ducks Unlimited in Saskatchewan.
- Saskatchewan Wetlands Conservation Corporation covering 10,522 hectares of wetlands, remnant prairie and riparian areas administered by this government agency.
- Redberry Lake Pelican Project, including 6,585 hectares at Redberry Lake, along with its associated uplands. Renowned for many years within Saskatchewan for its large and diverse resident populations of rare or threatened waterfowl, this site was also recognized in early 2000 as part of an International RAMSAR site.
- Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA), an arm of Agriculture Canada, maintains 728,460 hectares of pastures in Saskatchewan. Containing some of the largest remaining parcels of unbroken native grasslands in the prairies, this pasture system offers a significant contribution to the objectives of the Representative Areas Network.
- Canadian Wildlife Service, administrators of 10 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries covering 54,390 hectares throughout southern and central Saskatchewan, support the principles and objectives of the Representative Areas Network through management of these sites.
- Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan - Rocanville, owners of a 1,489 hectare parcel of open grasslands and aspen bluffs in southeastern Saskatchewan, entered into a partnership agreement with the department to continue to conserve the land's biological diversity in an area that has otherwise been developed for agricultural purposes.

- Canadian Forces Detachment - Dundurn endorsed an agreement with the department to recognize the ecological integrity and biological diversity of the 22,000 hectare Dundurn Camp, home to a range of mammals, birds and plants in a rich mixture of open grassland, shrub/grass communities and poplar stands.
- private lands containing native prairie located across southern Saskatchewan have also been protected through conservation easements. Easement agreements ensure that the land will remain in its natural state in perpetuity supporting a variety of wildlife, birds and plants regardless of changes in land ownership.
- selected purchases made through the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund also secured lands across southern and central Saskatchewan that contain native prairie, bluffs, and riparian features that support a range of wildlife species.

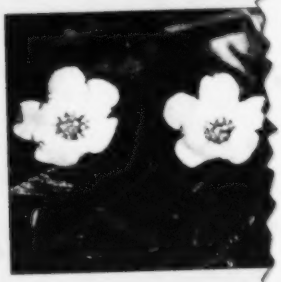


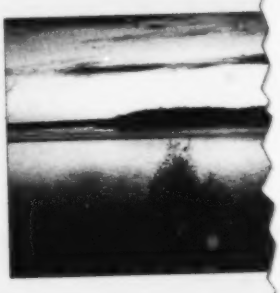
Common **GOALS**

One of the fundamental cornerstones of the Representative Areas Network program has been to seek out meaningful public involvement and input into finalizing site boundaries and confirming appropriate activities and uses for each site. To ensure that sites are recognized for their importance, and that long-term management is sustainable, local users and community residents must understand and support the values being protected within each area. And the best way to generate this support and long-term commitment for site preservation is to work closely with the stakeholders who have a primary interest in a particular site.

Representative areas are initially identified based on their location and the combination of geology, soil types, water features, and plant and animal communities they support. Following this scientific analysis, inclusive and open public discussion about the area ensues. Through local input, additional information about cultural values, uses and significant features is obtained, along with support for protecting and preserving the area. In some cases, many diverse interests and factors need to be considered, discussed and accommodated before finalizing the boundaries and management plans for the representative area.

In some areas, human activities and access may be limited in order to ensure threatened or endangered species or fragile features can be protected. In most representative areas however, multiple land use objectives are applied.





In general, this means that activities like hunting, fishing, trapping or hiking continue. As well, grazing of prairie grasslands is appropriate as long as sustainable grazing rates are developed and adhered to. Traditional aboriginal uses are unaffected by site designation, having taken place sustainably for generations. More intensive uses like commercial timber harvesting or mineral extraction can be disruptive to the landscape, and are not generally compatible with the objectives of the Representative Areas Network program in Saskatchewan.

Facilitating discussions with the diverse interests affected by site designation is a complex, time consuming process. In Saskatchewan, every attempt is made to reach consensus among the stakeholders regarding acceptable uses and activities within each site. Meaningful public discussion cannot be rushed. The department strives to achieve a careful balance between timeliness of designations and providing enough opportunity for public input. It is the public discussion phase of the process that largely determines when sites will be formally incorporated or designated into the Network. It is important to note also, that designation does not mean the end of public involvement.

Following formal designation of a site, public input into its long-term management continues through the establishment of an Advisory Council for each site or grouping of sites. Advisory Councils are groups of local people, stakeholders and site users that are concerned with management and use of the designated site. Each Council advises Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management on new uses, modifications to existing uses, and on any other matters of relevance in managing the representative area.

What the **FUTURE HOLDS**

Saskatchewan continues to work towards completing its Representative Areas Network. Living up to provincial and national commitments to contribute to the preservation of ecological diversity remains a high priority for the Government. In keeping with the need to have inclusive public input and support for site selection, designation and management however, some discussions to resolve issues may require additional time to complete.

The initial scientific evaluation of each Ecoregion has been completed. Potential sites that would capture under-represented features necessary to complete a comprehensive Network have been identified, and are now being brought forward for public discussion and input prior to finalization and designation. These sites, primarily located in the central and northern

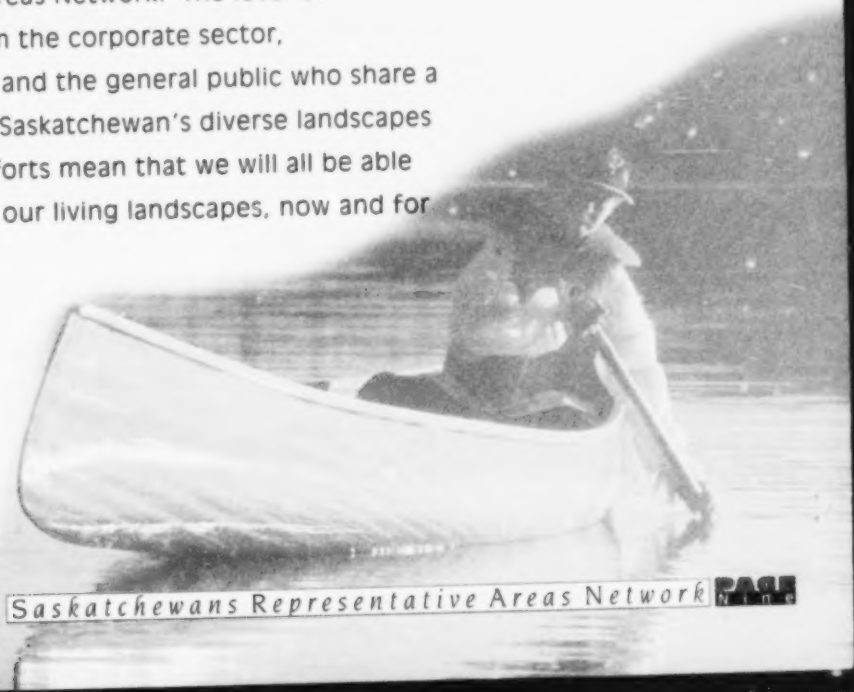
ecoregions of Saskatchewan where representation was not adequate, total about two million hectares. When designation processes are complete, this will result in a Network of sites protecting some 6.5 million hectares, or roughly about 10 per cent of Saskatchewan's total area.

Sites under discussion and at various stages nearing designation include:

Tazin Lake Upland	Tazin Lake Representative Area	124,000 ha
	Chappuis-Fontaine Lakes Representative Area	319,000 ha
Selwyn Lake Upland	Misaw Lake Representative Area	280,000 ha
Churchill River Upland	Geikie River Representative Area	260,000 ha
	Pink Lake Representative Area	350,000 ha
	Halldorson Bay Representative Area	6,700 ha
	Perry Lake Representative Area	34,800 ha
	Mari Lake Representative Area	31,600 ha
	Amisk Lake Representative Area	1,700 ha
	Sturgeon-weir Representative Area	3,400 ha
	Jan Lake Representative Area	32,900 ha
Mid-boreal Upland	Firebag Lake Representative Area	250,000 ha
	Selenite Point Representative Area	3,200 ha
	Budd Lake Representative Area	30,000 ha
	Caribou Flats Representative Area	6,800 ha
	Turtle Lake Recreation Site	1,800 ha
Mid-boreal Lowland	Lobstick Lake Representative Area	89,400 ha

The estimated sizes indicated here are subject to change, given the importance of public input in determining final site boundaries. Additional sites, although expected to be smaller in size, may also be identified over time to address gaps in representation that may become evident in the future. These will be identified and discussed in a broader public forum on an ongoing basis, as unmet needs are determined.

Saskatchewan is very pleased with the efforts and progress made to date to develop a comprehensive Representative Areas Network. The level of cooperation, involvement and support from the corporate sector, conservation organizations, resource users and the general public who share a common goal of protecting and managing Saskatchewan's diverse landscapes is especially gratifying. Together, these efforts mean that we will all be able to use, enjoy, appreciate and benefit from our living landscapes, now and for generations to come.



For more information:

If you would like to learn more about the Representative Areas Network in Saskatchewan, or if you have comments or suggestions that will assist our efforts, please contact:

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